



REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM
of Maryland African American
History & Culture

Interior/Exterior Design Facts

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture encompasses 82,000 square-feet of space in a five-story structure. Some of the major spaces within the building include an 11,500 square-foot permanent exhibit area that covers the majority of the third floor. In addition, the facility features 3,500 square-feet of space for special exhibits, a two-story theater, an orientation gallery, a museum shop, a café, a resource center which includes an oral history recording studio, a distance learning classroom, collections storage areas, a conservation lab, a terrace overlooking the Inner Harbor and offices for staff.

The Red Wall of Freedom



Perhaps the most visually striking and symbolically important element of the new museum is the Red Wall of Freedom. A vibrant red metal panel system will be used to produce a 96 feet high-curving wall. The Red Wall signifies a number of conceptual meanings and is the main focal point to the building's architecture. The Red Wall originates on the outside of the building and curves and slices through the Pratt Street elevation. The wall continues to cut through each floor plate until it terminates more than half-way into the project. The Wall also detaches from itself, once inside the building, creating an inner volume, which contains the main feature stair. The expanded portion enveloping the stair has a perforated metal panel that faces the main atrium. The perforations allow the visitor to experience the atrium space while ascending the stairs

plus allow sunlight to filter through during the day.

The wall's vibrancy is intended to symbolize the creativity, strong character and indomitable spirit of the Africans and their descendents. The building's award-winning architectural team, The Freelon Group/RTKL, A Joint Venture, felt that it was critical for the building to accurately represent the spirit of a people who were generous builders of their adopted home country. Clad with the strength and elegance of black granite permeated by the joy and pain of its Red Wall of Freedom, the museum's architecture represents the character, pride and struggle of Maryland's African Americans.

Exterior Materials and Systems

Granite Façade:

Over three-quarters of the exterior façade is clad with a dark black granite and with a honed finish. The honed process produces a non-reflective finish, which gives the stone a monolithic feel. The overall height of the granite portion is 72 feet high.

Red Brick Veneer:

The portion of the building facing the historical Flag House Museum is clad with a red brick that complements the existing finishes it faces. The brick contains black iron spot, which coordinates with the black granite.

Aluminum & Glass Curtainwall System:

The majority of the Pratt street elevation is comprised of aluminum curtain wall framing with glass infill. The glass panels are made of clear and reflective glass. The vision glass allows for an interesting view into the museum by people passing by. The curtain wall is also constructed on an outward angle, which produces a more dynamic elevation.

Graphic Panels:

Three very large graphic images are part of the building's composition. Each image is intended to convey a different message and is constructed differently depending on its location and purpose.

Aluminum & Glass Skylight:

The crowning element to the interior atrium is a large sloping skylight that allows soft filtered daylight into the floors below.

Interior Materials and Systems

Terrazzo Flooring:

Public spaces throughout the first and second floors were designed using an epoxy terrazzo system. This allows for a highly durable finish along with the ability to create an exciting and dynamic design.

Hardwood Flooring:

Golden toned maple flooring was used throughout the museum bookstore and the auditorium space.

Carpet:

Multi-colored carpet tile system was used throughout the Offices, Special Exhibition Gallery and Resource Center.

Porcelain Slate Tile:

A porcelain tile created to look like natural slate was used throughout the public corridors and the common space on the fourth level. The same tile extends onto the exterior terrace.

Perforated Wood Wall Panels:

The center atrium walls are finished with a wood panel system that doubles as an acoustical treatment necessary to combat the reflective sounds generated from the public spaces below.

Fabric and Vinyl Wall Coverings:

A number of rooms are finished using coordinating wall coverings, which soften the feel to each space.

Multi-Colored Paint Coatings:

Along with the wall coverings, a durable paint system was used on many walls that are in consistent contact with visitors or staff. The paints are formulated to withstand significant abrasion and repeated cleaning. The paints are also designed using multi-colors speckled throughout the paint finish, which helps to hide stains or scuffs plus creating a softer feel to the overall space.

Wood Slat Ceiling:

A natural finished maple wood ceiling system was constructed throughout the Museum Bookstore and the second level Lobby. The ceiling system is comprised of long linear wood slats alternating with an open void to either side.

Fold-out Seating System:

The auditorium/theater space incorporated the use of an automatic seating system that can be retracted and hidden when clear space is desired.

Glass Railing System:

Clear glass railing was used throughout the museum in order to minimize their visual impact and help the space feel larger.